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Creation of a fourth Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director position in UNICEF in the context of organizational initiatives to strengthen management for results

Summary

The present document provides the context for a proposal to create a fourth position of Deputy Executive Director in UNICEF at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

A draft decision is included in paragraph 8.

* E/ICEF/2014/5.

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1. In its resolution 67/226 of 21 December 2012, the General Assembly affirmed the importance of results-based management as an essential element of accountability that can contribute to improved development outcomes and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. While acknowledging the progress made in this regard by funds and programmes, the General Assembly requested UNICEF and others to accelerate work to develop a results culture at all levels.

2. Accordingly, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, outlined a set of ambitious results in seven outcome areas focusing on the most disadvantaged and excluded children. The plan includes a results chain with associated indicators, and suggests several priority actions to strengthen management for results including increased support to the wider use of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) by country offices.

3. With a clear mission and focused strategic direction, UNICEF continues to attract increasing donor support. Total revenue increased by over 300 per cent between 2000 and 2013. UNICEF income and trust funds grew from $4.5 billion in 2009 to $6.3 billion in 2013. This healthy growth, which reflects the confidence donors have in the capacity of UNICEF to deliver, allows the organization to expand its programmatic activities, focusing on the countries lagging behind in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Beyond the inherent importance in the results themselves, maintaining partner trust and fulfilling the associated responsibility to demonstrate value for investment are top priorities for UNICEF management.

4. A considerable proportion of UNICEF income comes from individuals, corporations, and private foundations. The private sector contribution, which has seen significant growth over the last few years and is expected to grow even more in the coming years, provides a unique opportunity for UNICEF to increase its core resources. In 2013, there were over 3.6 million individual pledge donors to UNICEF in over 50 countries. This growing core of supporters of UNICEF can help form the foundation of a global movement for the rights of children.

5. UNICEF country programmes benefit also from the contributions of several global alliances and partnerships, such as GAVI, the Global Partnership for Education, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, Scaling Up Nutrition, and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. As a founding member of these partnerships, which are critical for the realization of children's rights, UNICEF plays a positive role that must be sustained and enhanced.

6. Expanding programme and advocacy activities, increasing resources and responsibilities, and growing demands from global alliances and partnerships could outpace the capabilities of UNICEF to deliver results if organizational capacity is not strengthened commensurably. To this end, UNICEF will accelerate ongoing effectiveness and efficiency initiatives to strengthen management for results at all levels of the organization through the following:

(a) ***Establishing a post of Deputy Executive Director for field results***: Over the last decade, the number of global advocacy and programme partnerships has increased considerably, reflecting the global commitment to support the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF is actively engaged in 80 partnerships and has a governance role in 50 of them while hosting the secretariats of 7. By engaging these

partnerships at senior level, UNICEF is able to leverage them effectively and advocate for an equity focus. However, these senior-level engagements have put a heavy burden on the small executive team, limiting their available time for regional and country support and guidance. To mobilize focused and coherent support to UNICEF field operations, including emergencies, it is proposed to establish a new position of Deputy Executive Director primarily focusing on management for field results. The fourth Deputy Executive Director, on behalf of and together with the Executive Director, will oversee the performance of regional offices, and through regional directors, country office performance in achieving programmatic results and sound financial management. The creation of this new post will not impact the Executive Board-approved institutional budget, as the related costs will be offset by savings from attrition and transfer of other posts in headquarters to this function;

(b) ***Re-aligning headquarters functions***: To manage for results at headquarters level, it is necessary to realign certain functional grouping and reporting lines. Bringing together the Office of Emergency Operations and Programme Division (under one cone reporting to the same Deputy Executive Director) will result not only in greater efficiency but also in humanitarian assistance being delivered in ways that support early recovery and development as mandated by Member States in the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Similarly, to ensure that the external advocacy of UNICEF is more efficiently informed by evidence, research and data, the divisions and offices that perform these functions will be brought together under the supervision of the Deputy Executive Director of the Policy, Partnerships and Communications Group. The sections that handle partnerships with governments and intergovernmental and multilateral relations, including with the United Nations and international financial institutions, will be consolidated within this one division. The Secretary of the Executive Board will now report directly to the Executive Director;

(c) ***Confirming responsibilities of field offices***: A central strength of UNICEF is its decentralized organization, which allows its country representatives to exercise initiative and authority over programmes and resources. To further empower country representatives and regional directors, while holding them accountable for results, UNICEF reconfirms their authority and decision-making powers;

(d) ***Strengthening regional office capacities***: Regional offices have the primary responsibility and accountability for guiding and supporting the management of country offices. They are expected to exercise adequate oversight of country teams to ensure strong management for results and sound risk management. To help them fulfil effectively this crucial responsibility, the oversight capabilities of the regional offices will be strengthened as necessary;

(e) ***Simplifying work processes and establishing a global shared services centre***: Efforts to simplify work processes that began in 2013 will be accelerated. At the same time, certain back-office transactions are being consolidated and moved to a global shared services centre by mid-2015. The transfer of these time-consuming transactions, such as invoice-processing, payments, and other personnel and financial transactions, will allow country teams to devote more time to programming and monitoring implementation and assuring the proper use of resources transferred to implementing partners.

(f) ***Implementing matrix management***: To better integrate capabilities at all levels of the organization, matrix management will be introduced in various areas. The objective of this approach is to increase collaboration across technical functions (health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, protection, gender, and communication for development) and among country, regional, and headquarters teams to achieve better horizontal and vertical integration. For example, to support field offices to achieve outcome 1c of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (reduction of mortality among children due to diarrhoea) a team of experts in health, WASH, nutrition, and communications from headquarters and regional offices will be formed with clear annual deliverables. Among other outcome areas that could benefit from matrix management are girls' transition to secondary education, stunting and HIV prevention and treatment. Existing informal sectoral networks and communities of practice will be formed into child outcome teams. A culture that rewards cross-sectoral collaboration and management for results will be promoted throughout the organization. Matrix management will include clearly assigned roles and responsibilities for results;

(g) ***Leveraging technology and innovation***: To support matrix management and promote knowledge sharing within and outside the organization, we will invest in technologies that facilitate collaborative work. In addition, the recently established global innovation centre in Nairobi will help UNICEF harvest the best ideas being piloted in several countries for potential scale-up;

(h) ***Managing human resources***: Human resources remain a critical success factor in achieving the UNICEF strategic plan results. Efforts to improve talent sourcing, which began in 2013, will be accelerated. UNICEF will work to enhance its capability to respond quickly and flexibly to emergencies, while building talent to meet its growing responsibilities in post-crisis and fragile contexts. We will prepare a comprehensive plan to acquire, across the organization, needed talent while developing existing staff skills in management and leadership;

7. As we carry out these initiatives, we will keep the Executive Board and other partners informed of our progress and will seek further guidance as necessary.

Draft Decision

8. It is recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the proposed organizational initiatives to strengthen management for results;

2. *Approves* the establishment of the position of Deputy Executive Director for field operations at the level of Assistant Secretary-General;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNICEF to update the Executive Board, in his 2016 annual report, on progress made.